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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION  
Office of Distribution  
Washington 25, D. C.

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FACT SHEET ON NEED FOR MAXIMUM USE OF SECOND-HAND CONTAINERS

The Problem:

Shortages of new wooden containers and inadequate supplies of the more familiar types of used containers make it necessary for a comprehensive program of packing fruits and vegetables in substitute second-hand packages. It is necessary that all growers who will have crops to market this summer and fall anticipate their needs NOW and place orders NOW for at least their minimum requirements. (Growers of winter crops should also start making plans for using second-hand containers.)

The Why:

Over-all prospective fruit and vegetable production, far in excess of 1943, is probable. Peach and apple crops comparable with the "good" crops of 1942 are anticipated in the East and Middle West. Spring truck crops were of record production, and prospects for summer production are about 20 percent greater than in 1943. At the same time, the rate of container production tends to diminish. Since there were barely enough packages available to handle these crops in 1943 -- a year of low yields -- a serious shortage of containers in 1944 is a foregone conclusion. Growers should not expect to find an adequate supply of second-hand containers at a moment's notice. Because dealers may not have the desired types of containers on hand, growers should, therefore, acquaint themselves with the other types of used containers that may be substituted for those usually used.

Next Best Better Than None:

The more alert growers and shippers are already buying good used bushel baskets to meet their needs -- and the demand for these packages is expected to exceed available supplies throughout the season. Every good basket -- new or old -- should be used only for the better grades of tree fruit crops, particularly peaches and apples, destined for distant markets or for storage. For local distribution, sales on farmers' markets, direct to retail outlets and to truckers, substitutes for baskets can and should be used.

To many, the idea of using orange boxes for peaches and apples may seem neither necessary nor desirable but the situation may be reversed by July. Built with a center head, these boxes are sturdy and substantial. Filled only to the level of the top or slightly below, they stack well on trucks and may be used without covers. In certain areas they have been used for local distribution of peaches and apples even in normal times. Moreover, they are, or could be made available in appreciable quantities. Countless hundreds of orange boxes are going to waste every day because of lack of demand. Any used container dealer in any market would be glad to accumulate supplies for any grower.

The bushel hamper, commonly used for green beans and sweetpotatoes, has never been popular for peaches and apples. However, they may be the only answer some peach and apple growers will find to their container problem. For local marketing, hampers are a distinct possibility, and they, too, are relatively plentiful in the used container market.

Concord grapes and climax baskets go together, at least when the grapes are to be marketed fresh, and when the baskets are available. This year, climax baskets, either 4 or 12 quart size, will be just as scarce as bushel baskets. Juice and table grapes — such as Concord — could be marketed in used lug boxes. It has been done, and like orange boxes, lugs are obtainable in sizeable quantities.

#### Further Adaptation Necessary:

Because during 1944 shippers and growers must use every container they can lay their hands on — orange boxes, lug boxes, crates and boxes of all kinds and shapes baskets, and hampers — a study of the different types of used containers has brought forth the following suggested uses for substitute containers:

##### Lug Box:

5-3/4 x 13-1/2 x 16  
Approximately 18-1/2  
quarts, level full.

Celery hearts; celery cabbage; cucumbers;  
green corn; leaf lettuce (6 pounds); pars-  
nips (20 pounds) green onions, loose (10-15  
dozen); peppers; tomatoes; topped beets;  
carrots, turnips; summer squash, apples,  
peaches, cherries, grapes.

##### Mailed Orange Box:

11-1/2 x 11-1/2 x 24  
Approx. 1-1/2 bushels  
or  
12 x 12 x 24  
Approx. 1-3/5 bushels.

Asparagus; green corn; head lettuce; peppers;  
spinach; topped beets, carrots, turnips;  
cabbage; apples, peaches, pears, quinces.

##### N.W. Apple Box:

10-1/2 x 11-1/2 x 18  
Approx. 1 bushel.

Same products as above.

##### L.A. (Lettuce Crate):

Inside dimensions:  
13 x 17-1/2 x 21-1/2  
inches

Bunched beets — 4 dozen, radishes, 10 dozen.  
Bunched carrots, 5 dozen; onions, 8 dozen.  
Bunched parsley, 10 dozen; turnips, 3 dozen.  
Celery, cabbage, cauliflower; eggplant —  
3-4 dozen.  
Head lettuce 3-4 dozen, cantaloups; cabbage.

##### Half. L.A. Crate:

9 x 13 x 21-1/2

Same products as above.

##### Small Vegetable Crate:

8 x 12 x 22 inches

Many of the above products, particularly  
bunched vegetables.

#### Schedule of Goals:

To indicate the minimum reuse whereby the container supply might be stretched to cover 1944 requirements, a schedule of utilization goals, by geographical areas, has been prepared by the War Food Administration. This schedule was submitted to members of the several Industry Advisory Committees, Extension specialists, trade association executives, and other leaders in the industry, and in light of suggestions, has been brought up to date.



The purpose of the proposed percentages is to focus the attention of the entire industry on the need for the maximum reuse of these packages and thus encourage their conservation and accumulation. The percentages reflect not only the adaptability of the several products to second-hand containers, but also the historic utilization of and relative availability of used packages.

Inasmuch as the container problem is most serious at present in the Northeast and Midwest, percentages are shown only for those two areas. Here are the goals for reuse of containers, showing the percentages of various total crops which should and probably can be marketed in used containers:

<u>New England; N.Y.; N.J.; Del.; Md.;</u>		<u>Ohio; Ind.; Ill.; Mich.; Wis.; Mo.;</u>	
<u>Pa.; Va.; W.Va.</u>		<u>Kans.; La.; Colo.</u>	
			%
Apples	30%	Apples	30
Cherries	10	Cherries	10
Grapes	30	Grapes	30
Peaches	30	Peaches	30
Pears	30	Pears	30
Plums	30	Plums	30
Berries	30	Berries (crate)	30
Cranberry	10	Cranberry	10
Asparagus	30	Asparagus	20
Brussel Sprouts	60		
Beans	60	Beans	20
Broccoli	60		
Cantaloups	60	Cantaloups	20
Carrots	30	Carrots	20
Cauliflower	30	Cauliflower	20
Celery	10	Celery	10
Cucumbers	60	Cucumbers	30
Eggplant	60		
Escarole	60		
Greens	60	Greens	30
Lettuce	Dry 50	Lettuce	Dry 50
	Ice 10		Ice 10
Peas	30	Peas	30
		Parsley	30
Peppers	60	Peppers	30
Spinach	60	Spinach	30
Sweetpotatoes	30	Sweetpotatoes	30
Parsnips	60	Parsnips	30
Radishes	60	Radishes	30
Turnips	60	Turnips	30
Tomatoes	30	Tomatoes	20
Squash	60	Squash	30
Mushrooms	10		

#### Dealers To Cooperate:

Dealers in used containers are willing to cooperate in every possible way, and will make every effort to provide an adequate supply of substitute containers. However, they are unable -- physically or financially -- to stockpile containers for which there is not a ready outlet.

A list of licensed used container dealers and current information on available supplies of used containers will be furnished upon request addressed to the Fruit and Vegetable Branch, Office of Distribution, War Food Administration, Washington 25, D. C. or to the Fruit and Vegetable Division, Office of Distribution, 5 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago 3, Ill., and 150 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y.